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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 SANAA 001440

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA, NEA/ARP, DS/OP/NEA, DS/DSS, DS/ITA,
DS/ICI/PII, CENTCOM FOR POLAD, CJTF HOA

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [YM](#) [COUNTER](#) [TERRORISM](#)

SUBJECT: ATTACK ON ROYG MEDICAL ASSISTANCE CONVOY IN ABYAN
GOVERNORATE

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Alan G. Misenheimer for Reasons 1.5 (b
,d)

11. (C) Summary: A ROYG-protected medical assistance
convoy was attacked by unknown forces in Abyan governorate on
June 21. Reports of deaths and injuries differ, with the
highest estimate at five dead. No Amcits or other foreigners
were involved. The motive for the attack is yet unknown, and
no one has claimed responsibility. Embassy will continue to
seek further information. End Summary.

12. (S/NF) The PSO has provided additional information on
the attack that will be reported via ORCA channels.

What We Know -- Where and When

13. (C) All sources agree that the attack occurred on a
medical assistance convoy traveling in the Sarar district in
Abyan governorate in the early afternoon of June 21. This
area of Abyan governorate, to the northeast of Aden, is
well-known as an area in which the recently dormant
Aden-Abyan Islamic Army (AAIA) has occasionally operated in
the past. The convoy consisted of two vehicles, both with Red
Crescent markings and Defense Ministry license plates, with
approximately seven Yemeni military medical personnel heading
to Sarar to provide humanitarian assistance.

What We Cannot Confirm --
Details/Results of Attack, Who and Why

14. (S/NF) Most reports indicate an attack by rocket
propelled grenades and AK-47s by an unknown number of
assailants. DMI sources told DATTT that both RPGs and
explosives were used. Reports of deaths and injured differ.
Ministry of Interior told RSO that seven were injured but
none dead, and PSO contacts told Pol/Mil a similar story.
However, DMI contacts told DATTT that five were killed, which
concurs with what the Governor of Abyan told the PSO liaison
to Force Protection Detachment (FDP) Chief, who was in Aden.

15. (C) The identity and motivation of the attackers remains
unconfirmed. PSO liaison told the FPD Chief that the
Governor of Abyan presumed it was remnants of the AAIA who
attacked the convoy, believing it was about to attack them.
AP correspondent Ahmed al-Haj (please protect) told Pol FSN
that his sources said the attackers numbered about 20 and
were remnants of the AAIA.

Press Reports

16. (U) Official government daily al-Thawra reported on the
attack, quoting an official source at the Ministry of
Interior to Saba news agency. The source said, "yesterday at
about 11 am, and while a group of Yemeni doctors and their
assistants belonging to the military medical services was
providing medical services to the citizens in the region of
Habban of Sarar district, Abyan governorate, a group of armed
persons fired on the doctors' vehicles and their assistants
which resulted in the injury of seven persons, a doctor, five
assistants and the driver...." The source indicated that
security forces are tracking down the criminals to bring them
to justice. The Ministry of Interior urges citizens to
cooperate with the security forces "to seize these criminals
who committed this awful act by attacking people who are
rendering humanitarian medical services to citizens."

17. (U) Independent newspaper al-Ayyam reported the
statement above, adding another statement from the local
council in Sarar district. The statement condemns the
"criminal terrorist act" and says the presence of these
groups (the perpetrators) in this region is strange. It also
said that "these groups camped in the area. . .prior to the
parliamentary elections of this year, and they were carrying
out some provocative acts, firing on vehicles and tearing
down pictures of candidates."

Comment

18. (C) The attack was not directed at Amcits or other foreigners, and occurred in a remote area previously associated with violent acts by the AAIA. While there is no basis for viewing this as the opening of a new campaign rather than an isolated incident, the attack could nevertheless have implications for overall security in Yemen. Yemeni authorities have been forthcoming with information, and Post will continue to follow events closely. End Comment.
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